

MICROENTERPRISE FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION ACT OF 2000

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1143, and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1143) to establish a program to provide assistance for programs of credit and other financial services for microenterprises in developing countries, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 4287

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, Senator HELMS has an amendment at the desk, and I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. DEWINE], for Mr. HELMS, proposes an amendment numbered 4287.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate is considering the "Microenterprise for Self-Reliance Act"—legislation that would ensure the continuation of international microenterprise grant and loan programs that are administered worldwide by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This is legislation that I introduced last year, along with Senators BINGAMAN, CHAFEE, DURBIN, KENNEDY, SCHUMER, TORRICELLI, BOXER, COLLINS, FEINSTEIN, MIKULSKI, and SNOWE. Representatives BEN GILMAN of New York and SAM GEJDENSON of Connecticut introduced a similar measure, which the House approved last year.

I thank the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Senator HELMS, and ranking member of the committee, Senator BIDEN, and the committee staff for their cooperation and insistence on this legislation. My staff and I have been working closely with these offices since last fall as well as with the administration and the Microenterprise Coalition. I thank Chairman GILMAN and the House International Relations Committee staff for their ongoing cooperation and support of this initiative.

We believe the investment in microenterprise programs that we are now investing will reduce the need for foreign assistance in the future. By passing the Microenterprise Self-Reliance

Act, the Senate has a chance to ensure the future of these very successful programs and help provide a sense of hope and a future of possibilities for the poor in developing countries.

I thank my colleagues for their support of this legislation and I look forward to the continued success of the microenterprise programs.

I ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill be read the third time and passed, as amended, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4287) was agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 1143), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The absence of a quorum has been suggested. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to talk about comments that have been made, both on the floor and off the floor, with regard to the job that the distinguished Senator from Utah, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. HATCH, has been doing in regard to judicial nominations. I rise today to commend my colleague for the outstanding work he has done in regard to these nominations.

Make no mistake about it, this is tough work. No one who has not had the opportunity to watch this from a close point of view, to see it up close and personal, really has any idea what kind of effort Senator HATCH has made to make sure nominees who come to this floor have been examined very closely and very carefully. It is proper; it is correct that this be done. No one can do a better job at this than Senator ORRIN HATCH. I have watched him, day after day, in his examination and his staff's examination and work on people who have been nominated to the judicial bench. I must say he does a tremendous job.

Senate consideration of judicial nominations is always difficult. It is always contentious. That is just the nature of the business. Yet in this Congress, under the guidance of Chairman HATCH, the Senate has confirmed 69 Federal judicial nominations—69, for those who offer criticism. Mr. President, 35 of these nominees have been confirmed earlier this year, and we

have just confirmed 4 more. Yet not only has the chairman been criticized for nominees who are still pending in the Judiciary Committee, he has even been criticized for nominees who have already been confirmed; that is, nominees who are now serving, today, this very day, as Federal judges. Chairman HATCH has been criticized for not moving those nominees fast enough. I strongly disagree. I believe the chairman has done an outstanding job, a fine job. I wanted to come to the floor this afternoon to say that.

I would like to talk about the confirmation process for a moment because, again, I think many times people really don't understand what this process entails—or at least what it entails when the chairman is doing a good job. I think an explanation of the process may help those who are listening to the debate today understand why some of the delays in confirmation of judicial nominees occur.

The President has very broad discretion, as we know, to nominate whom ever he chooses for Federal judicial vacancies. The Senate, in its role, has a constitutional duty to offer its "advice and consent" on judicial nominations. Each Senator, of course, has his or her own criteria for offering this advice and this consent on these lifetime appointments.

The Judiciary Committee, though, is where many of the initial concerns about nominees are raised and arise. Often these concerns arise before a hearing is even scheduled. Judicial nominees are required to respond to a very lengthy and a very detailed questionnaire from the Judiciary Committee. They must submit copies of every document they have ever published, any writing they have ever published, and provide copies of every speech they have ever given. If they have previously served as a judge, they must provide information regarding opinions they authored.

There are various background checks conducted on each nominee. Sometimes outside individuals or organizations provide the committee with information about a nominee. Sometimes that information from outside groups comes very early in the process. But sometimes, quite candidly, it comes later on. Each time it comes in, the committee, committee staff, and ultimately the chairman must review that information.

All of this information is, of course, available to every member of the Judiciary Committee and must be thoroughly reviewed before the nominee is granted a hearing by the committee. If questions about a nominee's background or qualifications arise, further inquiry may be necessary. The chairman will schedule a hearing for a nominee only after thorough review of a nominee's preliminary information. At the hearing, a nominee has an opportunity to respond to any remaining